

Nursing Homes - Challenges and Successes

Do you have family or friends in a nursing home? If you do, you probably want to know that your loved ones are well cared for and treated with respect. Do you think there's a connection between the care given to residents and the safety of nursing home workers?

Nursing homes are complex environments. Nursing home workers face many hazards, whether they work in the laundry or the dietary department, do maintenance or provide direct care. In fact, the rate of work-related injuries in nursing homes is twice the rate of industries as a whole.

Many nursing homes know that a safe and comfortable work environment benefits not only workers, but also residents and the business itself. In addition to fewer injuries, benefits of a safety and health program include:

- lower staff turnover;
- reduced absenteeism;
- increased productivity;
- better employee morale;
- improved resident comfort.

To help nursing homes reduce injuries from the physically demanding work of caring for residents, OSHA recently issued *Ergonomic Guidelines for Nursing Homes*. The voluntary guidelines focus on practical recommendations from nursing homes around the country. This is the first of several industry-specific ergonomic guidelines OSHA will issue. For more information and a copy of the guidelines, go to www.osha.gov.

Borderview Rehabilitation and Living Center in Van Buren is one facility that takes worker safety very seriously. Because of a better than average injury rate and continuous improvement in safety and health, Borderview recently became part of OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). As a SHARP participant, the company is exempt from OSHA programmed inspections for one year. To find out more about becoming a SHARP company, call **SafetyWorks!** at 877-SAFE-345.



David Wacker from SafetyWorks! presents SHARP certificate to Borderview In-Service Coordinator Marilyn LaJoie, Risk Manager Stacy Madore, and Administrator Mark Albee. Congratulations to Borderview Rehabilitation and Living Center, the first nursing home in Maine to achieve SHARP status.

Lyme Disease: It's the Season

The risk of acquiring Lyme disease in Maine is low, but the number of cases has increased in recent years. Ticks can be found anywhere outdoors. They can bite year-round, although the peak season in New England is April to September. If you work outdoors or enjoy outdoor activities, here's what you can do to reduce your chance of getting a tick-bite:

Watch where you go:

- Avoid tick infested areas whenever possible.
- Stay in the center of paths.
- Avoid sitting on the ground.

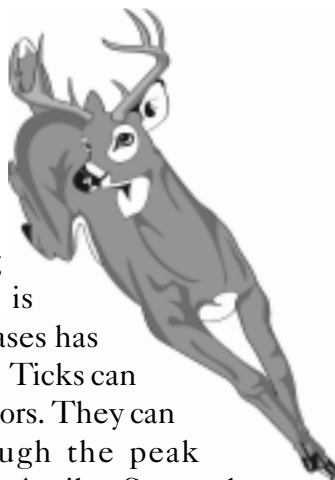
Dress properly:

- Wear light-colored clothing. This makes it easier for you to spot ticks on your clothing.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Tuck your shirt into your pants and pants into your socks. This keeps the ticks on the outside of your clothing and off your skin.
- Use EPA-approved tick repellents and be sure to follow the directions. Wash off the repellents when you return inside. Apply repellents for children.

Conduct frequent tick-checks:

- Check clothing and exposed skin. Then do a naked, full-body examination in a private location. Be sure to check the scalp, behind and in the ears, and behind any joints.
- Check your pets. Pets can bring ticks in from outside and put family members at risk for infection.

For more information on Lyme disease, visit the Maine Bureau of Health Lyme Disease Resource Center at <http://www.state.me.us/dhs/boh/ddc/lyme.htm> or call 287-3960.



List Your Class

The SafetyWorks! Web site includes a list of workplace safety and health classes in Maine (<http://www.state.me.us/labor/bls/upsafcl.htm>).

To list your class, contact Terry Hathaway at terry.m.hathaway@Maine.gov

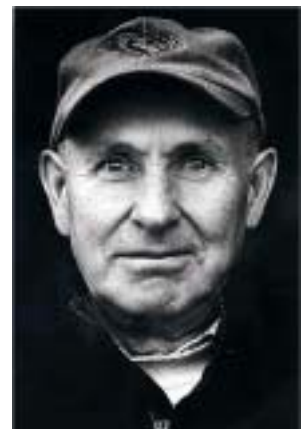
New Tool Will Help Strengthen Workplace Emergency Planning

OSHA has a new tool to help small, low-hazard service or retail businesses implement emergency action plans and comply with OSHA's emergency standards.

<http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/index.html>

Keys to Your Good Work - Safe Computer Use for Maine Workers

New SafetyWorks! publication has information and ideas to help computer users be safe and comfortable at work. Print a copy or order a free copy from www.Maine.gov/labor/blsmain.htm or call 624-6400.



Photojournalist Earl Dotter will exhibit his striking photographs of the hazards of the Maine fishing industry at MEMIC, 261 Commercial Street, Portland. The exhibit is open to the public free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (except holidays) until August 29.

Visit our web site at <http://www.Maine.gov/labor/blsmain.htm>

M A I N E

NETS

Network Of Employers
For Traffic Safety



The Maine Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) provides information, training and resources to help reduce traffic incidents involving employees. Over 90 employers participate in the Maine chapter of this nationwide program.

Maine NETS really is a network — members share their experiences, programs and good ideas with each other. Plus NETS offers training on many traffic-related topics, including:

- Winter driving
- Aggression/road rage
- Impaired and fatigued driving
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety

Your Driving Concerns

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of workplace fatalities, but many employers do not address traffic safety in their safety and health programs.

- Child passenger safety
- Defensive driving
- Commercial motor vehicle safety

Members pay a yearly fee to join NETS. But information from NETS is free in this new column. Send your driving concerns or a topic you would like addressed to michele.grant@Maine.gov and Maine NETS will reply.

Save the Date!!!!

***FREE Traffic Safety Fun Fair
August 8, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Augusta Armory***

Mines in Maine



Mining is dangerous work. While there are only a few active underground mines in Maine, the state has many surface mines, including public and private sand and gravel, stone crushing, concrete, and asphalt operations.

Under a grant from the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), **SafetyWorks!** trains small mining employers and their workers about hazards of mining and how to stay safe on the job.

In April, 110 people attended daylong MSHA Refresher Training programs held in Caribou and Portland. **SafetyWorks!** Occupational Safety Engineer Tom Joyce and Occupational Health Specialist Taras Dijak conducted the training. MSHA staffers from Manchester, New Hampshire and Johnstown, Pennsylvania provided informational materials and fielded questions.

For more information about mine safety, go to www.msha.gov or call **SafetyWorks!** at 877-SAFE-345.

Information in the articles is not a substitute for official policy or regulations. The editor is Lynne Lamstein, director of outreach and education for the Bureau of Labor Standards.

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The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Students Take Safety Seriously



13 building trades students from St. John Valley Technology Center recently earned OSHA cards for finishing a 10-hour general industry outreach safety program. Instructor Paul Ouellette became authorized to teach the program to students and issue cards after completing a train-the-trainer class through SafetyWorks! last year.

Front row, from left: Tobey Cyr, Jonas Bouchard, Robbie Michaud. Middle row, from left: Joe Houlton, Jacob Jarrett, Eric Thibodeau. Back row, from left: Center Director Conrad Cyr, Bobby Tardif, Instructor Paul Ouellette. Missing from photo: Scott Dionne, Aaron Lavoie, Andrew Michaud, Ronald Pelletier, Peter Gerard, and Matt Bechard.

Visit our web site at <http://www.Maine.gov/labor/blsmain.htm>

<i>Nursing Homes</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Lyme Disease</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Your Driving Concerns</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Students Learn Safety</i>	<i>3</i>

Spring 2003

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It all comes down to choices. Does the electrician decide to wear a mask crawling through the dusty basement? Does the electrical supervisor make sure workers wear masks as needed? Does the contractor provide appropriate equipment and training? Does the building owner require that all safety standards be followed?

No matter how much power and control we have over our work — whether it's our job to make the rules or to follow them — every day we make decisions that affect the well-being of one or many people. This issue of the

SafetyWorks! Newsletter includes information that will help you make safe choices as well as news of a company that chooses safety every day.

Join me in answering the question: What choices will I make today for my own safety and the safety of others?



Michael V. Frett, Director
Bureau of Labor Standards